

Kane, Brittany

From: Joe Eckert <jeckert@drcfc.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 10:08 PM
To: AppropriationTestimony
Subject: Restoring Independent Living Funding
Attachments: DRCFC General Brochure.pdf; Restore CIL Funding.PDF

Members of the CT Appropriations Committee:

My name is Tony LaCava and I reside in Hamden, CT. I serve as Executive Director of the Center for Independent Living in Stratford. Since I am retiring at the end of the year (after 25 years of service), my testimony cannot be viewed as self-serving. I am asking that full state funding for Independent Living Centers be restored.

Before I address the necessity for full funding, I want to thank you for ensuring state funding for Centers for the past 25 years; without state funds, our service to people with disabilities would not have been possible. To be clear, federal funds only supplement our efforts.

I understand that the state's financial situation is perilous, but the cut suggested is foolish for the following reasons:

1. Independent Living Centers are critical parts of the safety net assisting fragile members of our community survive---get food and shelter, jobs, and, for those with mobility issues, seek accessibility; particularly, after the events of the last weeks, diminishing the safety net in any way reeks of shortsightedness---maybe we'll save a few dollars, but the final cost can be unacceptable.
2. Eliminating Independent Living Centers will increase the pressure on the public system to provide eliminated services.
3. The suggested elimination will mean the laying off of 2/3 staff per Center (5 Centers), thus contributing to less state taxation (of staff and disabled consumers who can no longer be assisted in their return to work).
4. Over the years, Centers have become embedded in their regions---and they have advocated for more citizen involvement---this cannot be taken lightly because of the importance of the involvement of people with disabilities---getting more citizen involvement is never an easy task and the participation of our consumers is especially difficult and needed.
5. Centers serve as the umbrella home for other safety net programs---Money Follows the Person (MFP) and Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) services.

I have not emphasized the variety of services we provide to people with all kinds of disabilities, so I have attached some data that you will find interesting.

Again, thank you for your previous support and restore our funding.

Sincerely
Tony LaCava

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